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IN THE CLAIMS

Amended claims follow:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for reducing latency while handling network accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   generating a command in response to the receipt of the records by the aggregator;

(c)   wherein services are rendered in response to the command with minimal latency caused by the aggregator by initiating the rendering of the services before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the command includes a start command that is generated immediately before the aggregator generates a memory state in response to the receipt of records, so that the rendering of the services is initiated prior to the generation of the memory state.

3.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the command includes a start command that is generated immediately before other operations are performed by the aggregator in response to the receipt of the records.

4.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the command includes a start command that is sent immediately to a receiving device or module in a data collection system of which the aggregator is a component.

5.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein the start command is sent over a network utilizing at least one of UDP/IP, TCP/IP, and IPX protocol.

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6.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the records are received over a network utilizing at least one of UDP/IP, TCP/IP, and IPX protocol.

7.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the records are received from information sources.

8.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising determining whether any of the records is a signal, wherein the aggregation is evaluated in immediate response to the receipt of the signal to further minimize latency.

9.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product embodied on a computer readable medium for reducing latency while handling network accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   computer code for receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   computer code for generating a command in response to the receipt of the records before work is done by the aggregator;

(c)   wherein services are rendered in response to the command with minimal latency caused by the aggregator by initiating the rendering of the services before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

10.   (Currently Amended) A system embodied on a computer readable medium for reducing latency while handling network accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   logic for receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   logic for generating a command in response to the receipt of the records before work is done by the aggregator;

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(c)   wherein services are rendered in response to the command with minimal
        latency caused by the aggregator by initiating the rendering of the services
        before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

11.   (Currently Amended) A method for reducing latency while handling network
        accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are
        received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   sending a command to a receiving device or module in a data collection
        system of which the aggregator is a component in response to the receipt of
        the records by the aggregator;

(c)   wherein services are rendered in response to the command with minimal
        latency caused by the aggregator by initiating the rendering of the services
        before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

12.   (Currently Amended) A method for reducing latency while handling network
        accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are
        received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   evaluating the records in immediate response to the receipt of the records to
        determine whether an update or stop command is necessary; and

(c)   wherein minimal latency is caused by the aggregator by initiating the
        evaluating before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

13.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 12, and further comprising
        generating the update or stop command immediately in response to the
        receipt of the records if the update or stop command is necessary.

14.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the command is sent
        immediately to a receiving device or module in a data collection system of
        which the aggregator is a component.

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15.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the command is sent over a network utilizing at least one of UDP/IP, TCP/IP, and IPX protocol.

16.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 12, and further comprising determining whether any of the records is a signal, wherein the aggregation is evaluated in immediate response to the receipt of the signal.

17.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the evaluation of the records includes determining whether a threshold is met.

18.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the threshold is user-configured.

19.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the aggregation is updated by marking one of the records that was last sent if an update threshold is met.

20.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the aggregation is stopped by resetting a memory state associated with the records if a stop threshold is met.

21.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the aggregation is evaluated periodically in addition to being updated in immediate response to the receipt of the signal.

22.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product embodied on a computer readable medium for reducing latency while handling network accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   computer code for receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

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(b)   computer code for evaluating the records in immediate response to the
        receipt of the records to determine whether an update or stop command is
        necessary;

(c)   wherein minimal latency is caused by the aggregator by initiating the
        evaluating before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

23.   (Currently Amended) A system embodied on a computer readable medium
        for reducing latency while handling network accounting records using an
        aggregator, comprising:

(a)   logic for receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records
        are received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   logic for evaluating the records in immediate response to the receipt of the
        records to determine whether an update or stop command is necessary;

(c)   wherein minimal latency is caused by the aggregator by initiating the
        evaluating before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

24.   (Currently Amended) A method for reducing latency while handling network
        accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are
        received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   generating an update or stop command immediately in response to the receipt
        of the records if the update or stop command is necessary;

(c)   wherein minimal latency is caused by the aggregator by generating the update
        or stop command before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

25.   (Currently Amended) A method for reducing latency while handling network
        accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are
        received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   sending an update or stop command to a receiving device or module in a data
        collection system of which the aggregator is a component in immediate
        response to the receipt of the records by the aggregator;

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(c)   wherein minimal latency is caused by the aggregator by sending the update or
        stop command before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

26.   (Currently Amended) A method for reducing latency while handling network
        accounting records using an aggregator, comprising:

(a)   receiving records indicative of network events, wherein the records are
        received in an aggregator for the purpose of aggregating the records; and

(b)   generating a command in response to the receipt of the records by the
        aggregator;

(c)   wherein services are rendered in response to the command within a
        predetermined amount of time by initiating the rendering of the services
        before the aggregator begins processing a new aggregation.

27.   (New) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the services include
        operational support system (OSS) services, and business support system
        (BSS) services.

28.   (New) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the services include
        providing a user with a balance in real-time, updating a pre-paid debit
        account in real-time, detecting a denial-of-service attack in real-time, and
        detecting a network intrusion in real-time.

29.   (New) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the services are selected
        from the group consisting of operational support system (OSS) services, and
        business support system (BSS) services.

30.   (New) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the services are selected
        from the group consisting of providing a user with a balance in real-time,
        updating a pre-paid debit account in real-time, detecting a denial-of-service
        attack in real-time, and detecting a network intrusion in real-time.

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